

In November 1989, the Asheville City Council designated **Albemarle Park** a Local Historic District. Albemarle Park is a landmark in residential planning, architecture and landscape design that has been recognized to be of national significance. It is the result of a special collaboration of three prominent men during the 1890s: William Green Raoul, a leading railroad executive; Bradford Gilbert, a re-nowned architect in New York City; and Samuel Parsons, Jr., an important landscape architect.

In 1886, Raoul bought the 35 acre R.W. Deaver Farm just north of the city limits on Charlotte Street with the intention of building a summer place for his family. It wasn't until 1897 that Raoul decided to develop the property as a "residential park," with an English inn, housekeeping cottages and private residences. To develop the cohesive plan he drew upon the skills of his friend, Bradford Gilbert to design the structures and Samuel Parsons, Jr. to develop the site plan and design the landscape. The three were registered as the Albemarle Park Company. Their goal was to develop a "residential park" that took advantage of the hillside site.

Parsons sited the Inn and the cottages so that full advantage could be taken of the mountain views. His planting plan emphasized the special quality of the natural landscape and the importance of "shared" views. The Lodge was the first building built, in 1897. It was Raoul's residence and served as the office for Albemarle Park. The Manor, started in 1898, was the centerpiece of Albemarle Park. Even before the Manor had been completed, several cottages were also being built.

The period of primary historical significance in Albemarle Park was 1897-1913, the years when the Raoul family was actively involved in developing and enlarging upon the original plan. By 1913, 24 significant structures had been built: The Lodge, 1897; The Manor, 1898, 1903, 1914; Clover, 1898; Columbus, 1898; Milfoil, 1898; Shamrock, 1898; Orchard, 1899; Clematis (Laurel), 1901; Clio, 1902; Galax, 1902; Cherokee, 1903; The Clubhouse, 1903; Rosebank, 1905; Manzanita, 1906; Crow's Nest, 1906; Dahlia, 1906; Daffodil, 1906; Larkspur, 1906; Hollyhock, 1907; Marigold, 1907; Dogwood, 1910; Kalmia, 1910; Fox Hall, by 1913; Fox Den, by 1913. There were also five other cottages that had been built in Albemarle Park by this time. However, they were all private homes built by the owners on empty lots purchased from The Albemarle Park Company. These five were: Alva Glen, Brown Bear, Wildfell, Possum Trot and Breezemont.

After the death of Mr. Raoul, E.W. Grove purchased the land to add to his other holdings in the area. Additional cottages, private residences and accessory buildings continued to be built up into the 1950s. There are currently 42 primary structures and additional secondary structures such as garages. Through the years the cottages became year-round homes and the one-time vacation resort grew into a residential neighborhood. The Clubhouse was remodeled into

professional offices. The Manor Inn evolved into a residential hotel and today is apartments. Albemarle Park is unique among Asheville's Local Historic Districts. Every single one of its significant structures is still intact and relatively unchanged today.